

Nord Stream 2

Political influence on the International Trade within Nord Stream 2



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Nord Stream is an International project operated by Nord Stream AG. It is a liquified natural gas pipeline coming from the Russian Federation to Germany, and is a unique project as there is little cooperation done between the EU and Russia on such major level as the energy sector. This project is important in terms of international affairs, as it touches on the interests of two countries who are from different “blocks”.

In order to provide a clear understanding on what the Nord Stream 2 is, the author will combine topics such as international affairs and trade with currently known information regarding the Nord Stream 2 and how there could be more cooperation created between Russia and the EU. Finland, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Poland, the Netherlands and the USA, have had an impact on the Nord Stream.

Currently, the Nord Stream is facing several challenges that will be detailed in this thesis, the aim of this research is to be able to understand the topic and how international affairs are impacting the cooperation between the parties. The author will focus on identifying the current problems in understanding both sides and making possible solutions. Furthermore, the researcher intention is to provide best practices that could help future projects and improve the cooperation between the two sides.

Keywords Nord stream, International affairs, EU, trade and business

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Nord Stream is not a typical project, first of all it is made between two different "blocks" countries, which is very rare in such big scale. Nord Stream 1 had a lot of problems coming from the countries who did not participate in the project, the same is happening to its extension the Nord Stream 2. Research author thinks and believes that Nord Stream is one of the best examples to analyze in terms of how political decisions may affect the trading between countries. To enhance and support the outcomes of the interviews, the researcher will provide a selection of existing data about Nord Stream as well as the energy sector. As a multidisciplinary research, the author will also evaluate existing practices in International Affairs, international trading and cross-cultural communication. By doing so, the author hopes to articulate a series of best practices meant to ease the execution of complex projects like NS.

Furthermore, The energetic cooperation between Russia and EU was always under pressure and sometimes got under threat of existence, mostly it is due to the fact of difference in political and economic interests. Both sides understand why it is made and the existence of the energetic dialogue, like having control groups in order to solve different problems, between Russia and EU means that two sides already work on the possible solutions to the problem. The only thing, which is important in the research author's opinion is the influence of third-party countries in the project.

1.1 Purpose of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to understand what solutions can be implemented in order to improve relationships between Russia and the EU in terms of economical trade within the gas sector. Finding out what problems are obstacles to this cooperation and what can be done to avoid them in the future. The importance of the energetic and cooperative dialogue between two sides is very high, as neighboring countries, they should continuously revise those in order to solve problems and create possibilities for future development in any possible area.

The author aims to answer the following research question: “How Russian Federation and European Union could develop the trading between each other using Nord Stream 2 as a case study”. In addition, the example of problems which occurred during Nord Stream project construction will assist in understanding what aspects come into action, when such international project is created.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

First, the introduction, which is made in order to show the reader an idea of what is the research about. In the second chapter the research author will explain what methodology he used in order to understand possible solutions. The third chapter is made in order to give the reader clear view in the situation as well as the facts which led to the final solution towards the existing problem of dialogue between Russian Federation and EU in trade sector. Most of the assumption are going to be done on the example of Nord Stream AG project as well as another pipeline. In the 4th chapter the research author will bring the outcome of the interviews (questions can be found in the Appendix No.1), his vision on the answers and even the reason why questions were formed in the way they are formed. In the 5th chapter, the research author will explain the total assumption which can be done based on the outcomes of the interview, finding in different resources like journals, news articles and provide the vision of the author himself on the problems he found and in the last chapter tell one of the ways they can be solved.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research author has used different materials related to the relationship between Russia and the European Union. The materials are mostly based on news articles, business journals, the experience of employees working in the gas sector such as two interviewees brought by the research author.

The most important part of the research is based on knowledge and information received from the interviews conducted with Mr. Kudelka and Mr. Sagatelyan. The research writer believes that their answer provided insights and are a valuable source of information as both

interviewees are professionals in the gas sector and participated in international projects. According to this status, they can be called insiders of the problems regarding the project.

Mr. Sagatelyan as a Senior lawyer in Gazprom, provided a view and perspective on how the project was facing struggles and why international affairs and policies are important for any project alike Nord Stream. To enhance and support the outcomes of the interviews, the researcher will provide a selection of existing data about Nord Stream as well the energy sector. As a multidisciplinary research, the author will also evaluate existing practices in International Affairs, international trading and cross-cultural communication. By doing so, the author hopes to articulate a series of best practices meant to ease the execution of complex projects like NS.

The research author has interviewed Mr. Armen Sagatelyan and Mr. Juraj Kudelka to bring different views on the topic and make the analysis based on how different parties of the trade see the relationship between Russia and EU in the gas sector and what can be the problems in the international affairs between two parts of the trade and how in their perspective they might be solved.

2.1 Qualitative Research

The research author has made 2 interviews in order to see different approaches towards the situation regarding Nord Stream. It is made in order to make a comparison of approaches. The interviewees were selected in the way, that first Mr. Sagatelyan represents the big organization, which is Gazprom, his work position is Senior Lawyer at Stavropolski state at Gazprom and he shows the Russian point of view on different aspects. Gazprom is Russian company which specializes in gas sector, it is one of the biggest gas companies in the Russian Federation.

The second interviewee is Mr. Juraj Kudelka, who represents a smaller company GALON, s.r.o in Slovakia, Galon-Oil, s.r.o in the Czech Republic. He is the Chief Executive Officer and a 100% shareholder of the company. The Galon is specializing in Pump and Compressor manufacturing, so it directly operates with the companies in gas sector.

Both companies are specified in the oil and gas sector, so they might be counted as insiders of the current problem regarding the gas trade between Russia and the EU.

2.2 Literature review

The research author based this study on many new articles, journals, reports and other sources that had any connectivity with the topics: Nord Stream, dialogue between Russia and EU, the gas sector and impact of LNG on the environment.

News articles are used mostly due to the fact that Nord Stream 2 remains unfinished by the time research is being done, so there is not clear finalization to the topic and information updates on daily basis, also it will bring in the cultural and political view of different countries on the topic. The journals and other sources like reports are used in order to show analytical point of view on certain aspect that Nord Stream project is touching. The only problem finding the literature about how legislation decreases its efficiency after being in a long process of implementation and negotiation.

The writer of the research believes that many things related to the project might change in future, as it is still unfinished and faced a lot of struggles, especially followed by poisoning of Russian blogger Aleksei Navalni (Euro News, 2020), which has led to slowdown once again, apart from the US sanctions.

2.3 Keywords

Policy maker – the governmental representative or worker who is responsible in the policy creation, basically direct influencer on the legal acts. This term is used in the research as policymakers play a crucial role in any international project based on the finding from the interviews done by the research author. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020)

LNG- liquified natural gas, first, has a natural origin, the formation of which took place deep in the depths of the Earth. Just like coal or oil, it is a product of organic origin - dead organisms, which for various reasons, did not decompose finally but formed muddy sediments. Due to geological activity, the sediments moved to the depths, and there, under

the influence of giant pressure and high temperature, carbon was transformed into compounds called hydrocarbons. Those that have large molecules turned into oil, and small molecules became gas. Therefore, gas is an eternal satellite of oil fields. (Investopedia, 2020)

Globalization – the interdependence growth between cultures, economies and population, it is achieved by trade of goods, investment, people and information in a cross-border trade. (Peterson Institute of Internatioanl Economics, 2020)

Pipelines:

Nord Stream – is a pipeline between Russia and Germany, which goes under the Baltic sea. Operated by Nord Stream AG (Gazprom, 2015)

Nord Stream 2 – is a pipeline, which can be considered as extension of Nord Stream. Operated by Nord Stream AG. (Gazprom, 2015)

Sothern Stream – is a pipeline, which construction was canceled due to political differences and argues. (Morningstar, 2014)

Turkish Stream - is a pipeline from Russia to Turkey, which is transporting LNG. (IBNA, 2019)

3 KNOWLEDGE BASE OF THE RESEARCH

The knowledge base of the research is based on the different sources related to the Nord Stream and other pipeline projects alike Nord Stream. They are brought in order to make a clear picture on what are the other pipelines and what kind of problems the other projects faced during their construction period. Furthermore research author will tell about how safe towards environment the LNG is and how the project is impacted from different countries.

3.1 What is Nord Stream 2 and why is it needed?

Natural gas distribution from Russia has proved itself to be effective, Germany has gained a lot from the Nord Stream 1, so the extension process has begun. The Nord Stream 2 is basically an extension for Nord Stream 1, so a lot of legal aspects could have trespassed and some of the other aspects could go through a much easier process. (Whist, 2008)

3.2 Introduction to Nord Stream 2

Back in the late 90s, it became clear that the export of Russian gas through the gas transmission systems of Ukraine and Belarus cannot fully meet the needs of European consumers in an uninterrupted supply of enough gas volumes. In 2005 the North European Gas Pipeline Company was established, which was later renamed Nord Stream AG with the following companies as its shareholders: Gazprom with 51% stake, Wintershell AG with 24.5% stake, and E.ON AG, which also received 24.5% shares. And on December 9, 2005, the construction of the first gas pipeline section was commenced. (Whist, 2008)



Picture No.1 The First Nord Stream. (Bailey, 2009)

Two years after the establishment of the company, which united the major energy companies of Europe, the Dutch company N.V. Nederlandse Gasunie is a shareholder, which receives 9% of shares from the German companies' capital. Construction of the gas pipeline subsea string started in 2010 and the second string was completed in 2012. Two 1,224-kilometer-long branches enabled the transportation of 55 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The resource base for Nord Stream is the Yuzhno-Russkoye gas field with reserves exceeding 600 billion cubic meters. (Whist, 2008)

Russia's refusal to implement the South Stream project, which was to run along the bottom of the Black Sea and connect Russia with Southern Europe, also affected the plans to implement the Nord Stream 2 project. (Richard, 2020)



Picture No.2 South Stream. (Gazprom, 2014)

Russia gave up South Stream for several reasons. According to Russian officials, the main problems were the lack of Bulgaria's consent to lay the pipeline in its territorial waters, as well as the "unconstructive position of the European Union". As an alternative option, it was initially decided to develop cooperation with Turkey, build the Turkish Stream pipeline and implement the gas hub construction project in Greece, the project was frozen in 2015. Although the project was not completely canceled, the cooperation between Russia and Turkey in this area was also suspended. (Richard, 2020)



Picture No.3 Turkish Stream. (IBNA, 2019)

At present moment, Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 are the only joint natural gas transmission projects between Russia and European countries. That is why it is impossible to underestimate the significance of such events as signing on June 18, 2015, of the Memorandum of Intent by the heads of Gazprom, Shell, and E.ON as well as by a member of the OMF Board of Directors to implement the project for the construction of two gas pipelines along the Baltic Sea bottom, now known as Nord Stream 2. (Gazprom, 2015)



Picture No.4 Nord Stream 2 (Yle, 2019)

3.3 Costs of the Pipeline

The costs for the pipeline were split, Russian Gazprom had to pay for 50 percent of the project's construction, while all other participants have to pay for another half all together. In such a way Gazprom benefits as the company still stay as a provider and not as a receiver, so cutting down any costs, in this case, would just save up money for them as well as making the deal fairer. (Foy, Toplensky, & Ward, 2017)

The total investments are over 10 billion euros according to the economic analysis, the price of the pipelines themselves are not so expensive as the production of them is based mostly in Russia, but the construction is hard, as there are not so big amount of ships, which are able to construct the pipeline over the sea. In example, Gazprom and partners of it in Europe, could choose another route to transport LNG from Russia to Europe. The costs of alternative routes, for example, for building the pipeline through Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, would be 3.5 billion euros. Gazprom, in research author opinion, has decided to avoid crossing the land territory of other countries probably to the fact, that Nord Stream 2 supposed to be a project directly between the Russian Federation and Germany. (Przybyło, 2019)

ALTERNATIVE 1 (Ust-Luga) Russia - (Greifswald) Germany	DISTANCE km	COST €
Ust-Luga (Russia)	50	€2.7 - 3.5 billion
Estonia	240	
Latvia	250	
Lithuania	190	
Kaliningrad exclave	160	
Poland	440	
(Greifswald) - Germany	70	
TOTAL	1400	€2.7 - 3.5 billion

Picture No.5 alternative route No.1 (Przybyło, 2019)

The total costs can be evaluated only after the building process will officially finish as the sanctions of the US, even though they are not done according to international economical legislation, are slowing down the process as much as possible. The clear example is that Swiss underwater pipeline construction company Allseas, who has been threatened with sanctions, had to stop the construction process. That led into extension of the project's deadlines. (Arciga, 2019)

3.4 Effect on Europe energetic security

Last years have proven to be hard in the relationship between the US and the EU. A lot of the EU companies got into the sanction list due to trading or organizing business with companies from Russia which were in the US sanction list. (Katie McDougall, 2020) EU like any other economic alliance, would not like to get resources from just one country due to the ways the energetic security is achieved. (Jakstas, 2020) The US have mostly quite expensive offers and most of the time on political levels can stop any trading if they just think that it is the right way. So, some of the EU countries started to make a view on Russian possibilities of energetic resources. Russia as one of the biggest natural gas distributors has a good price together with a high quantity, so that is the reason why many EU countries have started to make deals with Russia in terms of trade within gas sector. (Whist, 2008)

Having more than one dealer of certain energetic resource helps to achieve energetic security, as even if one of the distributors stops the gas export, the second one will be still running. As an example, same happened to Ukrainian energetic security, as Ukraine could not pay off the debt, which was 4.37 billion euros, so Gazprom had to shut down the gas pipe. This situation had indirect impact on companies in the European Union, who were receiving the gas from the Ukraine. It led into shortages in Eastern-Europe, what had impact on the ordinary citizens in the wintertime. (BBC, 2014)

3.5 Natural Gas from Russia

In 2014 Russia supplied 146.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas to Europe. The North European Gas Pipeline project is primarily aimed at the redistribution of gas flows from the GTS of Ukraine that requires modernization. (Janjevic, 2018)

When implementing Nord Stream-2 project in full capacity, four branches of the gas pipeline ("Nord Stream" and "Nord Stream-2") will be able to pass up to 110 billion cubic meters per year, which will make up 75% of the Russian Federation gas export to Europe while maintaining current supply volumes. (Institute, 2017)

Plans of Gazprom to refuse gas transit through the territory of Ukraine met with sharp resistance from Eastern European leaders and the U.S. foreign policy department. The South Stream project, which Russia refused to implement at the end of 2014, could become the main competitor of the North Stream. Regarding the possible competitors Russia should not underestimate the entry of new players into the market as well, such as the USA. Shale gas transportation from US may become Russia's competitor in the European market. (Хижняк, 2012)

To understand how important Russian LNG is for Europe, the research author provides the data from Eurostat to show the percentage of natural gas imports from Russia in Europe. Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Finland have 75% of all energetic resource imports coming from Russia. Countries like Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Austria, Slovenia have 75% of natural gas imports coming from Russia. It is quite a big percentage of share in the European gas market. That is one of the reasons why the EU is quite dependent on Russia in the energetic sector. (Eurostat, 2020)

3.6 Ecological Aspect

Ecology is a very sensitive and is a quite important topic especially in such big projects as Nord Stream. To avoid possible dangers and environmental catastrophe everything needed to be taken into account in creating something which might have a big environmental impact, Nord Stream is not an exception for it, that is why there were many analytical works done on how Nord Stream 2 might affect the environment. (Institute, 2017)

Such major projects run through very deep investigation in regards of potential ecological impact, so the existence and construction of Nord Stream 2 already confirms the fact that in terms of environmental impact it does not have that much minuses and negative aspects.

Therefore, the Eco-friendly European perspective and vision is not effected or under the threat. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020) First of all, it is estimated that its reserves are much larger than other species of fossil fuels, such as oil and coal. (ucsusa, 2014)There are other advantages:

1. Low level of environmental pollution;
2. Emits low amounts of greenhouse gases;
3. Distribution to the consumer does not require expensive processing;
4. Higher efficiency in terms of transportation.
5. Does not emit Nitrogen.

Besides, and in the research author's opinion, all of these positive aspects had led to Germanies decision of taking the LNG in consideration for using as one of the primary energetic fuels.

3.7 Political aspect

The research author decided to show how different are the views on the projects are to demonstrate why for each participant of the project it is important on the level of national economic interests. The two countries, who are directly involved in the project of Nord Stream AG are the Russian Federation and the Federal Republic of Germany. However, other participants are indirect as that Nord Stream is officially a gas pipeline between Russia and Germany, other small lines coming out of it to different countries like Netherlands, are coming through land territory of Germany and operated by a different company and different pipeline name, so it is incorrect to say that Nord Stream itself effects other countries apart from the direct participants.(Picture No.1 on page No.2 of the research)

3.7.1 German view on the project

Germany is a major player and participator in Nord Stream project. From the political point of view the support of creation of Nord Steam 2 was from the early beginning of the project as well as later, when US sanctions became a threat towards whole construction of the project. Nord Stream, without a doubt, is a very important project for Germany as natural

gas is less harmful for environment from all fossil fuels and in fact even the way of retrieving it from the ground is a better option than shale gas that US is trying to distribute to Europe. Mostly, the research author is making such assumption due to the fact that shale gas was proven to be in some aspects more damaging to the environment. (CarbonBrief, 2013)

Germany as the receiver of the liquified natural gas from Gazprom, according to the figures becomes quite dependent on it. Even though Germany has a focus on making the green energy the most used energy in the industry by building the wind and solar energy systems, many sceptic specialists believe that more likely it energetic needs of Germany might get replaced with Russian natural gas. In this case Germany might become quite dependent from Russia and, in opinion of research author, that might lead to political influence from Russian side. (Forbes, 2018)

US sanction have made a lot of problems in the construction process, as Swiss pipeline construction company had to stop all the work due to getting threats from Donald Trump on getting into the sanction list, as US congress have stated that all the companies involved into Nord Stream project will get under US sanctions. (DW news, 2017) German leader Angela Merkel has told that in case of sanctions will be real, Germany might make sanctions towards the US trade and strike them even harder, as the US in her point of view had no right to put sanctions on the company which affects the sovereign countries which do not create any threat towards US economic or political areas. (Arciga, 2019)

3.7.2 Russian view on the project

Russian politics on the top level, meaning Ministry of International Affairs and the President of Russia Vladimir Putin are supporting the project as it is one of the best Russian natural gas trades being done for a long time. Russian government from the early beginning supports the project because mostly it is made in order to maintain good relations with German politics and provide Russia with a budget extension due to this trade. Example of such support are mostly not practical, but diplomatic and mostly based on statements of Russian Ministry of International Affairs. (Kommersant, 2020)

Russia as the provider of the gas is mostly doing the acts towards assisting the construction of Nord Stream 2 in international affairs after US sanctions strike the Nord Stream constructing companies. (Arciga, 2019) Few companies have left the project, which led to the extension of the project deadline, which caused the German companies to wait longer. It affects the reputation of the Russian Federation on international level. Russia is currently in discussion with Germany and together they found certain plans, which might work even if they get under the sanction list. One of such, is just pushing the legislation factor, as the existence of Nord Stream 2 means, that it was approved through all European legislation and restriction, so it is a legal project between Russia and European Union, so the US could probably withdraw in future from "attacking it" by sanctions and limitations. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020) Another factor, which is important in research author opinion is that economic sovereignty of Germany should remain untouched by another countries, it is a legal right of any country to trade with another country. Russia was pushing the economic opening to other countries, while major players as US are trying to slow it down by using different organization to decrease economic sovereignty of Russia and Germany. Such organization are World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). (Russian Journal of Entrepreneurship, 2018)

3.7.3 United States view on the project

From the beginning of the project, The United States tried to prevent Nord Stream from happening. The researcher found that, at first, US president Donald Trump acted upon political and diplomatic channels, like his speech regarding on why "Germany should buy first gas from Russia and later on ask for help from the US". (DW NEWS, 2020)

The main view of the US on the topic of Nord Stream is that they want to have their shares of natural gas secured in Europe, and in order to protect them they are trying slowdown the construction process of Nord Stream 2. Nevertheless, they cannot stop it for sure, as the Nord Stream 2 is fitting all European regulations and everything apart from legislation, in the opinion of the research author, can be considered as just political manipulations. (DW NEWS, 2020)

3.7.4 The energetic relationship between Russia and EU

Idea of energetic dialogue between Russian Federation and European Union first was created in 1986 by prime minister of Holland, as he proposed involvement of USSR into energetic sector of Europe. In 1997 Russian Federation and European Union has signed the agreement of partnership and cooperation, which became the legal basement of energetic dialogue between Russia and EU. (Lanshina, 2011)

Energetic dialogue between Russian Federation and European Union creates the possibilities for the increase of trade volume and investment exchange between each other. Modern structure of energetic dialogue between two sides provides cooperation within countries which are states of EU, energetic infrastructure of EU and international financial institutes. There are 4 thematic working groups, that involves over hundred European and Russian experts from private sector. Those groups are specializing in discussing questions regarding investments, infrastructure and trade efficiency in energetic sector, and creation of potential improvements in dialogue between Russia and EU. (Lanshina, 2011)

3.8 Importance of Political aspect in any trade

First, the policymakers are influenced by national focuses and the political situation in the country, it is so due to the fact that policymakers are creating the rules, law and legislation within the country. As mentioned before in the thesis in the Ukrainian case, after the situation around the Crimea crisis, the Ukrainian government decided to not pay back the dept of the country to Gazprom, due to the political focus change. That has affected even European Union, as the trans-Ukrainian pipeline was threatened to be shut down, nevertheless, that would lead mostly to losses inside of Ukraine, still gas companies inside of EU who were dependent on the gas coming from that pipes were scared of the shutdown, which could have led towards their bankruptcy, that opinion the author has due to news articles and assumptions have done from the talk with Mr. Sagatelyan.

The second factor why political decisions have an influence on project like the one in research is that, companies like Allseas construction company, which participated in Nord Stream, was under threat of sanctions from US. That could be counted, in the opinion of the

research author, as an unfair move as the US has nothing to do in trade between Russia and European Union, as both sides had their interest in the Nord Stream AG, and it would not be a smart move to abandon it just due to political vision of third-parties, which were not involved directly in the Nord Stream.

The third important factor is that, most of the time, small companies when they create joint-ventures between any countries, should take into action the political factor, but most of the time due to either miss calculation or misunderstanding the importance of the political influence on certain aspects of the trade leads to failure as in example of Southern Stream, which was not a small project, but still faced struggles with coming into existence.

(Morningstar, 2014) That assumption could be done due to how even such a major project as Nord Stream was influenced, in its case, it was resulting in a slowdown of the construction process and leading to changes in the final deadline of construction, which basically in its way lead to loses in the budget of EU, so any political decision even outside of the deal is important and needed to be taken into account to avoid losses in money or time.

4 INTERVIEW RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1st question:

The first question is made in a way, that the research author will get the idea if the insiders of natural gas trade between the EU and Russia think that the relationship between two sides can be improved.

Armen Sagatelyan believes that "European Union has different values" and points on how big sometimes the impact of the culture is on the decisions. He believes that still in case of relationship improvement on both sides of the deal, can give opportunities for the development of both sides and that in case of such improvement both countries will benefit more, "achieve the heights which were not achieved before and create a more constructive relationship"(Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020).

Mr. Kudelka believes that whether it comes to international, political or economic affairs among Russian Federation and European Union relationships can be improved and "will be

needed for future development, inclusion and growth". The biggest threat from the side of the EU in the opinion of Mr. Kudelka "in which EU is considered and perceived on the global scale, it is not a secret that EU is more Western-block oriented with its values, strategy, and policies"(Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020). He also says regarding how US elections and the win of Joe Biden can affect the relationship of the EU with Russia, as Joe Biden sees the Russian Federation as the biggest threat to US security. So this, in the opinion of Mr. Kudelka, can become the biggest threat in the dialogue of Russian Federation and EU. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

From both interviewed persons, the research author can see that culture is playing a big role in terms of making big projects and the creation of joint-ventures. Both sides are similar in terms of agreeing on how beneficial the trade between Russia and the EU can be and that there will be more achievements done after both sides find a way to have a win-win situation with each other. Nevertheless, Mr. Kudelka also mentions the impact of the EU being Western-block oriented and that even US elections can be a threat towards the relationship between Russia and the EU.

2nd question:

This question was formed in such a way that the research author will have a clear view on a potential threat to EU energetic security, as Russia has one of the highest market shares in Energetic resources trade with the EU.

In this question Mr. Sagatelyan said that Russia is having largest cities located in the European part, sharing history with Europe and having a lot of trading relationship along with the history, so Europe, as well as Russia, were always dependent on each other, Russian gas is distributed to Europe through many channels and Nord Stream 2 is just an extension on one of the pipelines, so changing the distribution percentage will not change the situation on terms of dependency of Europe on Russian resources. Regarding the energetic security Armen stated, that Europe has more than 60% of resources in the energetic sector coming from different countries, so he does not believe that it is under threat at any point. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

Mr. Kudelka starts by saying that "EU is heavily dependent on the Russian gas, which is distributed via pipeline transmission". The Nord Stream 2 confirms in his opinion that relations among those two parties are developing concerning gas trade, however, Mr. Kudelka says also that the EU withing its energy security plan aims to decrease the amount of carbon dioxide – the decarbonization of the emissions caused by fossil fuels. "Natural gas is the cleanest among the fossil fuels we know nowadays, therefore the transition towards sustainable development scenario will require plenty of time." (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020) – says Mr. Kudelka and adds that natural gas will be needed for upcoming decades, therefore EU and Russia relations in gas trade won't be threatened as much as it might seem. Mr. Kudelka says that another fact must be noted, which is three seas initiative, which might decrease the amount of LNG that is going to be transferred into the pipeline transmission network from Russian Federation due to the new development of projects of LNG terminals within the tree seas initiative. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

The similarity in the answers is that the EU is not under threat of weakening its energetic security, but the difference is in the way why it is so. Mr. Sagatelyan mentions that reason is that the EU has 60% of its energetic resources coming from different countries apart from Russia, while Mr. Kudelka mentions the shift towards more sustainable resources. Mr. Kudelka also mentions that Natural gas as the cleanest fossil fuel will be still needed in the EU for at least some time, so there will be not so high changes in the percentage of trade with Russia in energetic sector. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

3rd Question:

This question was made in a way, that the research writer gets a perspective of how important political aspects are in trading sector and what might be the factors on which Russia and EU should work to improve the partner opportunities.

Armen says that as a lawyer he knows how important policymakers are in terms of international trade, any sanctions or prohibition of certain trade route can lead only towards the worth stability in all of the sectors, so that is why Armen believes that policy makers together with authorities in International Affairs and Economical sphere play the crucial role in any trade. He believes that in order to increase opportunities in both sides of the trade,

Russian representatives together with their partners in Europe need “as a good couple” sit together in front of each other and discuss the problems, as only after finding the problems out together they can create solutions for them and work on something good rather than a constant argue and decreasing efficiency of such relationship and losing possibilities.

(Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

Mr. Kudelka said that policymakers are crucial for the development of the international and economic relations between Russia and EU. In his opinion, the policymakers of both regions need to find common, mutual, and similar dialogue among the development of the regions, once the policies won't be suitable and beneficial for the parties involved among those regions it "may lead into collapse and discouragement of trade, investments, and collaboration". (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

In this question, we can see that both sides agree on the fact that policymakers play a very crucial role and that both sides should find a way to have a proper dialogue in order to avoid the possible problematic outcome from the scenario where both sides will not find consensus.

4th Question:

This question was made by the research author to understand what factors might have played a role in the slowdown of Nord Stream 1 and what is important in taking into account when analysis of the political aspect importance comes into place.

Answering this question Mr. Sagatelyan decided to say that all the projects require the authorities to sign them and make them real, what happens in the current world situation and international affairs between Russia and Europe is that one always wants to benefit more than another, even in Europe itself, when first Nord Stream project was appearing every country apart from Germany wanted to benefit something in exchange for giving the possibility to build the pipeline through their water territories or for using their channels of provision. Trade is always dependent on this aspect and the negotiations are always taking time in order to get a situation where both parties end up gaining something. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

In this question Mr. Kudelka decided to answer "with simple words", he said that big projects require bid decisions and that, of course, is difficult in terms of time, therefore a time-consuming process might be raised from the negotiations until the real win-win situation occurs for all of the parties. Consensus, is in fact simple nowadays, in the capitalized, globalized world every state involved in tremendous public sector projects wants to benefit most out of it. This is a long-time consuming process, however, "vis-à-vis meetings should be done behind the round table with all parties involved on regular basis". (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

Both sides say that it takes time order to find a win-win situation on both sides and find an agreement that fits both sides. That is hard to achieve mostly due to the fact that even though some countries are not part of the deal, many times they also want to benefit something from the deal. Mr. Kudelka adds that in order to achieve that meetings need to be done on regular basis. This is proven to be effective on the Russian research done on the dialogue between Russia and European Union. (Lanshina, 2011)

5th Question:

This question was made in order to get a view on why certain acts might have been done in order to stop Nord Stream 2 from appearing or make it run slower than needed.

Armen kept the answers short and said that someone who is not part of the deal always loses something, it can be a political reputation, it can be a loss of the share in the market. Nord Stream 2 is not an exception, where the US is losing the market share of energetic materials on the European market. That is the reason why it was slowed down. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

Mr. Kudelka says that the so-called hybrid war was present in the world for several years, even decades. He wanted to say that Nord Stream 2 was in fact war of three regions at the same time, the United States, the EU, and the Russian Federation. Mainly, Russia and the EU are in charge of the project, but in his opinion, the US was trying to get involved by different types of sanctions. Market share for the US in natural gas exports was threatened by this project since they are trying to get natural gas to Europe via the three seas initiative at some

point. Therefore, Mr. Kudelka says that the process was extended due to several dislikes of parties involved in gas exporting. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

Both interviewees are saying similar regarding the US "participation" in Nord Stream, as they were putting sanctions on any company which would participate in the construction of Nord Stream, that is why some companies had to quit the process, just because of being afraid of getting into sanction list. Mr. Kudelka and Mr. Sagatelyan agree on the fact that it might be done due to US share on European energetic market, as by just existing Nord Stream indirectly lowers down their percentage of share. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

6th Question:

This question was made in the way, where the research author more clearly sees what might be the factor of EU dependency on Russian resources and if interviewees believe that in case of increase in trade of energetic resources EU will lose its independence in terms of energetic security.

Mr. Sagatelyan said that due to the European Union's development of eco-friendly sources there is the possibility that nobody will be dependent on Russian resources in the future, he also mentioned that both parties benefit from the trade, so there is no point in saying that somebody benefits more than other. Russia could supply resources to some other country, Europe could get their supplies from somebody else, so speaking of dependency, the increase of trade and cooperation will only benefit both sides in terms of how efficient the supply line is. "Russia and EU are neighboring countries they would just benefit from one another". (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

Mr. Kudelka mentioned that the dependency of the EU from Russia in the energy sector is hard to forecast nowadays. The energy sector, in his opinion, will face a tremendous shift towards a sustainable development scenario. He says, that perhaps, net-zero emissions might become a new trend after a sustainable development scenario will be achieved. To answer this question, Mr. Kudelka says that in his opinion, the most significant aspect to be considered for the upcoming years is the challenge of decarbonization, industrial consumption of energy resources. "Coal and oil might be replaced slowly by decades,

however, natural gas will play a crucial and key source role in terms of energy" – (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020). He also mentions that Russian Federation is still a major partner of the EU in gas supplies and assumes that the EU does not have to be dependent on the Russian resources, since the EU faces a transition into the new green energy and economy. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

Both interviewees agree that the EU shift towards more sustainable resources might play a role in the future, but in the current situation, Russia has always been one of the biggest partners of the EU in terms of energetic resources. Mr. Sagatelyan mentioned after the interview that "history shows it" and he added that even during Cold War, Russia was still supplying the energetic resources to Europe without threatening to "shut down" the pipelines, so that, in his opinion, might be the reason why European Union is weakening their independence in terms of energetic security. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

7th Question:

This question is made to give a perspective of what interviewed persons believe are the positive aspects of trade between Russia and the EU, and also how it could be increased.

Armen said that in modern times there are only positive aspects in terms of trading with neighboring countries. EU does not gain less from trading with Russia for sure, as the Russian prices for distribution of liquified gas are pretty cost-effective and even with the same price they might not be transported that easily. Nord Stream is a good example in this case, as having a straight pipeline is much more effective in terms of receiving the resource. "I think that to create a higher volume of goods export there first need to be a common need for them inside of EU". (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

Mr. Kudelka in this question believes that the EU is "definitely poor partner with Russia apart from energy relations" (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020). There are several European countries which may exploit from trade towards Russian Federation, however, in fact, the trade as of today is poor as the EU is more oriented among its states and markets, the single market initiative by the EU has opened the potential for members of EU within the EU. The

further implications of the trade, in the opinion of Mr. Kudelka, are oriented towards regional development, and that it will require common objectives in terms of economic cooperation and economic growth. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

Mr. Sagatelyan has said that the trade with the neighbor is always better even if it is just in the gas sector, while Mr. Kudelka believes that EU is a poor partner apart from energy relations with Russia, as it is more "inside" oriented and that increase of trading can be done only in case there will be similar objective found between EU state members, in this fact, Mr. Sagatelyan has the same view. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

8th Question:

This question is made in a way, where the research author could understand what channels are important in case of establishing a higher percentage of trade between two sides of the trade.

For this question, Mr. Sagatelyan has mentioned that even though both sides, Russia and European Union always found ways to have a proper dialogue, nevertheless the biggest threats are the regulations and different policies which affect directly the effective trade and creating of joint projects. Inside of European Union, everything operates almost like in one country, so that is why inside of it is easy to create a joint-venture while having such a project with some company outside of the EU is quite hard to create, as different policies are made to slow down the creation of such projects, so mostly the big projects as Nord Stream can appear. "I would not say that there is a specific channel which can make more joint-venture, but rather a combination of different once, who are making such major projects as Nord Stream AG possible". (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

Mr. Kudelka says that "In fact, 99 percent of all EU companies are micro, small and medium-sized companies up to 250 employees, with annual revenues up to 50 million euros". Since, SMEs are considered as the backbone of the EU economy, in the opinion of Mr. Kudelka, he said that dialogue between SMEs from both regions should have a chance to collaborate on a mutual platform, however, the policies are still "disadvantageous" for both regions. Therefore channel between the EU and its SMEs likewise in the Russian Federation should be

brought up on collaboration on the platform where both regions can get an advantage from the operations. "Small enterprises do not have access to such possibilities nowadays".

(Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

In these questions, we can see that the different backgrounds of two interviewees play a role in their answers, as Mr. Sagatelyan starts to answer the question by speaking about policies and regulations that slow down the process of creation of more joint-ventures and cooperation between EU and Russia, while Mr. Kudelka says regarding small companies and how they are finding the way to make some sort of cooperation between two sides of this trade. Both interviewees agree that the policies are making a disadvantage, so it confirms one of the biggest threats of the research author in terms of what can be the problem in cooperation between two sides.

9th Question:

This question is made to assist the research author in finding an answer to the research question. Also, this question is made to find out what in the perspective of interviewees are the strength and possible weaknesses of the Nord Stream and alike projects.

As a lawyer Mr. Sagatelyan specializes in the legal area, that is why answering this question he said that legal acts and policies are hard to create when you have in the example of EU 27 states which have different visions on certain topics and whose vision on certain aspects is always different. Nord Stream was very affected by it, as Germany is the only direct country EU-state which benefits directly from it, so that is why the creation of it took quite a long time in terms of finding the ways to make it real and by making some benefit to all countries which were effected indirectly by it. A beneficial factor of trade between Russia and the EU, for example of Nord Stream, is that the EU is a neighboring country as well as a stable partner for the Russian Federation. The positive aspects of having a neighboring country to transport the goods and especially such strategically important as Liquified Gas might make all the negative aspects to be forgotten as such trade is more stable and effective for both sides. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

In the opinion of Mr. Kudelka, the most relevant issue here is the interest of different parties involved in the policymaking process. "EU consists of 27 member states, the diversity and deviation might seem slow" (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020), so in fact differences between the members of EU are high in terms of interests and national focuses. In the opinion of Mr. Kudelka, from the Nord Stream not only member states of the EU have benefited, but the whole EU did. "Russian Federation is a stable partner for EU in terms of energy – gas supplies" (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020). Consequently, few member states are closer towards different world-wide economies such as China, the US, even in some cases Northern Africa added Mr. Kudelka. The position of EU, in his opinion, is located strategically as it can play towards all of the world-sides on the map, "Russian Federation is bordering EU and this is a high advantage for the EU to have a stable, strong and crucial partner on its borders".(Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

10th Question:

The last question was made in order to get a certain understanding from the interviewee's perspective what organizations play role in international affairs in terms of trade between Russia and the European Union.

Mr. Sagatelyan has said that if by agents are meant the organizations or countries which are indirectly involved in the Nord Stream in any way, then there are a lot. Swiss companies which are building the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, were pushed away from the projects due to the threat of US sanctions, which is affected indirectly by the Nord Stream, as they are in threat of losing a certain percentage of share on European natural gas market and that is why their political and economic allies are trying in different ways to pressure other companies, who operate within the Nord Stream project to either go out completely or lose time when trying to solve different legal disputes. In International Affairs Russia and the European Union where always in different conditions due to either difference of opinions inside of EU or "by some third parties, which are trying to destabilize the relationship between Russia and EU" (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

“As our company is explicitly operating within the CEE region, I can say that I am not aware of many agents on the market apart from national embassies in the territory of the Russian

Federation" – said Mr. Kudelka. There is an agency helping Slovak companies such as SMEs as well as large corps exporting goods, services abroad beyond Slovak borders, the agency is called Exporteri.sk, “in case I would be in need of help getting external advice I would contact them” (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

This question was probably understood in different ways by interviewees, as we can see that Mr. Sagatelyan was trying to answer who might come in the middle between Russia and EU in a trading relationship in a way, that they are trying to slow down the process or destabilize it, while Mr. Kudelka has said regarding which organizations are assisting the trading and who could potentially help the European companies to get into Russian market or another way around.

4.1 Summary of the interview

The research author believes that making an interview where both sides can show what is their own opinion are the main factors of why Nord Stream is experiencing so many problems with especially the US indirect involvement in the project. It shows how much also the political influence is important on any international trade, as those who can be identified as "politics" are also the policymakers, so their words and direct regulations can change the situation on any project.

The national focus can also have a high impact on any trade, as in the example of EU as Western-block oriented, can get a negative effect on their relationship with Russia due to influence from the US, Mr. Kudelka mentions this in his interview. Also, it is very important to say, that as Mr. Sagatelyan said, there is a possibility to avoid any misunderstanding between EU and Russia, if they will sit at a table of discussion and have constructive dialogue, take into account the economic interest of both and not take political influence from other countries into account, it could create much more effective and full perspectives future between each other.

5 ANALYSIS

5.1 Finalizing the Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 case

Based on the news articles, reports and together with the interviewee's opinion research author can say that on the example of Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 future projects can learn how to avoid getting into the same problems, that Nord Stream AG has experienced. The Nord Stream is a good example of constructive cooperation between Russia and the European Union in terms of finding the solutions towards some of the problems, originated from national or economic interests. The existence of the project itself proves that in case the project brings values to both sides of the deal, it will become real even after facing a lot of problems caused by countries alike USA, their sanctions and different organizations like WTO and IMF. (Lanshina, 2011)

On the another side, it shows how big impact policymakers have on the projects, so some sort of minor project, which would try to operate in this or different area, would be probably pushed out due to the political pressure from one of the sides, and this political pressure would be done through different policies, regulations or legal disputes in order to stop the project or slow it down. The Nord Stream was supported by many political figures, like Angela Merkel and Vladimir Putin, so that is one of the reasons why it became possible to make it.

5.2 Understanding the origin of problem from the interview

The current problems in the relationship between the Russian Federation and European Union in terms of trade and international affairs are not simple, they come deeply into the cultural difference between two parts of the deal, which leads to many policy changes and certain actions made from third parties to prevent that relationship from improving, as interviewees Mr. Sagatelyan and Mr. Kudelka said, EU is made of 27 members, which all have different views on certain aspects, but also different economic interests in different areas, because of that making everyone satisfied of the deal is quite hard to achieve and takes a lot of time in negotiation. That is why taking into account all the factors, like cultural

and political aspects is important when finding point of improvement in the existing dialogue.

Policies and other political factors have a direct impact on the people. For example, in Russia back in 1990s when Boris Yeltsin started to privatize the governmental property it led to the crisis in whole country and creation of very rich business owners and poor people as that political decision led to a crisis and default of Russian ruble, which made almost whole population unwealthy. Such decisions was only based on political aspect, but nevertheless effected whole population and led to situation where in Russia death rate was higher than birth rate. (Igoryevna, 2016) Even though this situation cannot be directly connected to Nord Stream, in opinion of research author, it still shows how big impact political decisions play in trade and everyday life of any person.

5.3 Answer to the research question

From the beginning of the research the author sees what was the situation like around the Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2, what played a big role in the projects, why natural liquified gas is good for European Union from ecological perspective, and with the opinion of interviewees would like to get the answer to the research question.

Russia was involved into European history throughout its existence, it has participated in Napoleonic, first and second World War. The influence of Russia on the European history is big. So that is why finding the possibilities and point of improvement in dialogue between Russian Federation and EU is important. Russia has proven to be a stable partner in terms of energetic relations. That assumption the research author can do based on the interviewees' opinions as well as the example of trade done between Russian and West-Germany during Cold war.

To avoid such a problem of misunderstanding each other, in opinion of Mr. Sagatelyan, both sides need to avoid stepping into political views when trading, as trading is not meant to be political, it is meant to be a way in which both parties gain something in exchange for goods, money, or influence. Misunderstanding happens due to different views of sides on a certain topic, for example with the Crimea crisis. So, in order to develop the relationship in terms of

trade, the trade should be made logically only by the value it is bringing in. So, in order for a more effective approach in it. All the companies and organizations related to trade between Russian Federation and European Union need to get away from personal political interests and focus on more what can be achieved together. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

The second solution towards, the problem of relationship is probably organizations which will be able to connect two companies, one from Europe and one from Russia, in case there is a certain need for it. It will of course need certain regulations to be made from both sides, but as the Nord Stream AG example shows, Russian companies can indeed cooperate with European Union companies in a joint venture. So as Mr.Kudelka mentioned as about 99% of European companies are small or middle level in terms of employee capacity, maybe there should be more channels created in order to connect such small companies with Russian once. Even consulting agencies might help in this case, but not many companies can either afford to go to such or there are just not enough companies which fit the criteria to participate in a joint venture between Russian Federation and European Union. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

Russian Federation is quite rich with raw resources, as an example wooden industry, natural gas industry and the metal industry in Russia are not only very effective in the perspective of the volume they can produce, but also more affordable and most of the time has better quality than other competitors in this sector of economics. So why is it hard? Coming back to the question of how EU could increase the number of projects between two economic zones is not that simple, but an achievable thing after negotiations. It can be easily achieved on the side of the International affair, but the hardest point will be the political part. As the political situation plays a crucial point on both sides, as the EU wants to have their values pushed, while Russian politics are not ready to make compromises. (Whist, 2008)

6 CONCLUSION

To answer the question of how the relationship between the Russian Federation and the European Union can be improved, the research author will say that, in order to make the “meltdown” in relationship between Russia and European Union, there should be a certain

organization created where representatives from Russian Federation and European Union can discuss the existing problems in the trade without third-party participating. One of suggestions of Mr. Sagatelyan was that such organization should be established under view of United Nations to fit all international legislation norms and acts, so freedom of trade will be provided for both of the sides without getting pressure from countries which are against such trade.

Russian policymakers should understand that it is not times of Soviet Union anymore, while EU countries should also understand that Russia is not a threat to European Union in the ways of energetic security or any other way, so that might be the first step. The proof of this statement should be the fact that even during the Cold war back in 1973, the Soviet Union was bringing oil to Western Europe even though it was a different block country. (DW news, 2017)

The second step should be that European representatives and Russian should sit at one table creating new projects that will benefit both sides, European Union has a good education system bringing in engineers and high working standards and quality of work, while Russia is a big country full of free space for any big projects and with lots of raw material for the production of goods as well as energetic resources. Both sides can benefit from each other, but first, as Mr. Sagatelyan mentioned they should "sit in front of a round table, like a good couple" and just discuss what wrong they think the other is doing. In the 21st century, there is no point in acting against personal interests and possibilities of creating major projects like Nord Stream, just due to small misunderstandings of each side together with conflicting coming from legal disputes and political manipulations. All countries should live together in peace, respect, and have dialogue in case something is wrong. European countries should not forget that Russia is a major trade partner and also is a neighboring country, so that is one of the reasons to have a good relationship with each other.

Summarizing the research, author would like to state that in order to decrease the political involvement into trade deals and effect countries indirectly through political channels, there should be an organization created, that could control such operations and prevent political aspect of coming in into the action. Trade should be done equally no matter of what kind of political situation is in the countries, as it will make development inside any country to grow

instead of down grading due to pressure from third-party countries. It can be an organization led by the United Nations, so international pressure from different countries will be prevented or at least decrease the impact of it on international affairs and international trade, also something on European or any level can be created at least to decrease the chances of such problems appearing. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020) The final and the most important solution will be creation of an Organization alike WTO, but between the Russian Federation and European Union, as based on the Russian analysis of the energetic dialogue between Russia and EU (Lanshina, 2011) there is no major organization for it, there are only so called “control groups”, which are specializing in the understanding the problems in the trade with finding the possible solution. Mr. Sagatelyan has advised that in order for an organization which will resolve all the political aspects from happening will work only under the direct control of United Nations, as its legislation and focus is based on establishing the right and fair treatment in any possible trade, cooperation or projects between countries. In that way it will be possible to achieve the efficiency and the win-win solutions in any trade done between Russia and EU, which will make possibilities for both sides to achieve higher effectiveness in the trade and make projects which are currently impossible to create due to the political factor. The research author would like to state that all countries should trade freely with one another and the trade should be done fairly to achieve what is now impossible.

7 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The future research can be conducted in order to create a possible idea of how an organization under UN could be done in order to resolve the problem of political influence on the projects alike Nord Stream. How it might be structured, how it can be operated and how the creation of such would actually affect the possible relationship between any two countries. The research author has found this topic to be effective in future development in terms of free trade and thinks that it would be a big impact on the trading and any economic affairs done between countries and possible creation of worldwide free economic zone, which will be a big achievement for the humanity and could solve a lot of problems in terms of the trading efficiency between countries, as the third-party participators of the project, which have a negative impact on them could be just “jumped over” or ignored in case it fits the UN agreements.

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8.1 INTERVIEWS

Sagatelyan, A. (2020). Senior Lawyer, PJSC Gazprom. Interview 20 November 2020. (Sagatelyan, interview 20 November 2020)

Kudelka, J. (2020). Chief Executive Officer, GALON s.r.o (Slovakia) and Galon-Oil s.r.o (Czechia). Interview 01 December 2020. (Kudelka, interview 01 December 2020)

Appendix 1: Questions from the interview

Step No.1 (basic questions):

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) What company are you working for?
- 3) What is your position in the company?
- 4) What is the sector your company is specialized in?

Step No2. (Questions related to the Thesis about Nord Stream 2):

- 1) Currently, the diplomatic relations between Russia and EU is still under struggle since the Crimea crisis, do you think that relationship between Russia and EU can be improved and what do you think are the biggest threads stepping in between such improvements?
- 2) Russia as one of the biggest trade partners of the EU has around 40% of EU natural gas imports. Should the EU focus on increasing this number or in order to protect the energetic security change the trade partner to avoid the political risk that can cut down the gas import from Russia and make a thread to EUs energetic security?
- 3) To what extent is the political aspect important when growing those numbers? In your opinion, in which factors should the EU and Russia work to improve those partner opportunities?
- 4) Nord Stream 2 was slowed down by different political aspects like the Crimea crisis, before that Nord Stream 1 was also being slowed down by different sides, what is your opinion on this case and what do you believe that something can be done in the diplomatic sector to stop such slowdowns for the sake of efficiency?
- 5) In past, there were a lot of different acts done in order to stop the Nord Stream 2 from appearing, what are in your opinion factors that were affecting such a decision?
- 6) Do you think that the EU energetic sector might become dependent on Russian resources in case of an increase in energetic cooperation and trade with Russia?
- 7) What is the potential of the increase in terms of trade between Russia and the EU? Are there positive aspects of the trade done with Russia from the EU perspective or is the EU gaining less from such trade?
- 8) What do you think is better to be done from a diplomatic perspective in order to create more joint-ventures between Russia and EU and what channels can be used in order to create more cooperation between two blocks in order to achieve higher energy efficiency in the EU?
- 9) Nord Stream is an example of cooperation between the EU and Russia, what kind of problem is it facing the most in your perspective? What in your opinion is the strength of such a project?

10) Are there other external agents you could name that you believe play a role in the international affairs between the EU and Russia? What and Why do you think they gain or lose with this trade agreement?